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A RAILWAY COLONY.

WE are an experiment, and, on the whole, a successful one, and therefore deserve to be reported on. Five years ago we only existed in the hopes of a railway company and the schemes of an architect; now we are a thriving community of about five hundred. We are also building rapidly, and there are no houses or lodgings—scarcely even a bed—to be let, as we find out when we unwittingly ask a friend to come and stay the night without consulting our wives; for we are all married except one old gentleman, the doctor, a young engineer who lives over the baker's shop in the High Street, and (we believe) the new curate. I say *we believe*, because he is very new indeed, and has only been seen by three young ladies (visitors) who happened to be walking up and down the road leading to the station when he arrived. He had only a portmanteau and a large deal box (full of books, of course)—indubitable sign, according to the ladies in question, of his celibacy.

But we are beginning in the middle, and forget that we have not even introduced ourselves. *We*, then, are the male inhabitants of what, for want of a better name, we have called a Railway Colony; it is not a village, for that implies a degree of rusticity to which we have no claim; it is certainly neither a town nor a city, boasting neither a member of parliament, a town-hall, nor even a parish pump; neither is it a suburb properly so called, for we can walk at least three miles in all directions without coming upon anything in the least degree urban, besides being some fifteen miles distant from the metropolis. We are simply a congregation of human beings who have flocked together at the call of the railway company and the architect before mentioned, to take season tickets, and people a certain number of houses built on the top of a hill. It seemed almost like a work of magic to the few people who lived at Robber's Heath before. The railway company builds a station; another company, of which the architect is the most visible representative, maps out the

heath into little square plots, and builds little square houses, and, *presto*, the thing is done. Their beautiful but uninhabited neighbourhood suddenly bristles with scaffolding poles, and scarcely are the scaffolding poles pulled down before the place is besieged and taken possession of by a peaceable army of four or five hundred strong, collected from the four winds of heaven.

It was the architect who gave us our name, for he is an enterprising man of considerable (looking to the variety of the houses he built, we might say enormous) invention, and has travelled in America. Considerable difficulties beset him, as I have heard him tell. ROBBER'S HEATH, though picturesque and romantic, was not a title calculated to produce confidence in a matron's bosom, or to impose with its important sound; it was, in a word, a bad advertisement, and he had little reverence for the antique, as his houses bear sufficient witness. What he wanted was a useful, imposing title that would look well on a board at the railway station, and lead at once to conversation and inquiries. He had also an honest wish (so he says) that the name should be appropriate and expressive of the spirit of his scheme. So he called it, with the consent of the railway company—well, never mind what he really did call it; but what he first wished to call it, and still wishes he had called it, was SUBURBOPOLIS. He was no classic, reader, and, as I have said before, had travelled in America.

Suburbopolis then, as we will call it, is built on a hill which is both healthy and very improving to the leg, which latter fact may be perhaps the reason for the preference for knickerbockers which, in the summer, is shewn by the male inhabitants. Being on the top of a hill, and hidden by trees, as at first built, passengers by the train declined to believe in the existence of the place at all, and so it had like to have proved a failure, if it had not been for the ingenuity, which almost amounted to genius, shewn at the crisis by the often-mentioned architect. The prominent features of nature have been used for many grand purposes, from the rock-palaces and temples of Egypt, to the White Horse of the Saxons; but the grand scheme of Michael

Angelo for chiselling a rock into a statue of Pope Julius II., and the yet grander one of that older sculptor who wished to carve a huge mountain into a mighty resemblance of Alexander the Great holding a city in each hand, scarcely equal in ingenuity, if they surpass in grandeur, the idea of the first man who turned the whole side of a hill into a gigantic advertisement. As the people would not go up to Suburbopolis, he brought Suburbopolis down to the people. In plain English, he dotted the hill all over with picturesque little cottages, one above the other, with all the front windows turned to the railway instead of the road. The passengers no longer disbelieved in Suburbopolis; instead of reading its imposing name first, and then surveying the blank hill with mixed feelings of wonder and ridicule, they looked at the pretty cottages, and then read the name, and thought it must be a very nice place to live in, so healthy, so convenient for town, and such pretty cottages. It is true the pretty cottages were little but an advertisement, being only pretty at a distance, and remarkably small and uncomfortable to live in, with thin walls of bricks as porous as sponge, and gardens that a good rain washed, flowers, cabbages, and all, down hill into your neighbour's kitchen or your own; but they served their turn, they brought the people up the hill and shewed them the real Suburbopolis, healthy, dry, and tolerably built at the top, and their first inhabitants only vacated them to move higher up.

So it came to pass that the desires of a railway company, and the schemes of an architect, became an established fact, but yet, though we are beginning to have an individuality of our own, we bear most unmistakable signs of one origin. Our principal features, so to speak, betray our parentage, and our whole social condition is governed by architecture and season tickets.

For instance, we seldom refer to each other in conversation by name only, it always being a moot point whether the person mentioned is known to our companion by his patronymic. It is always 'Mr Brown, the man who lives in the house with the turret;' or 'Mr Jones—you know the man—he always goes up by the 10.50 second class;' or 'Mr Robinson, the little fat man, who always comes puffing up (to the station *subaudito*) at the last moment.' Our whole conversation is more or less tinged with the two prevailing ideas of our generation. Even the commonplace bald subject of the weather becomes impregnated with peculiar meaning in our mouths. During the late rainy summer, for one remark respecting the bad state of the crops, there have been a hundred respecting the comparative merits of gaiters and overalls viewed with regard to a short passage through the rain. Overalls protected the knees, gaiters could be taken off in the carriage, &c. Fine days, you would imagine, were of little interest to us except as to drying our thin walls, or exempting us from sitting in wet clothes in the train. Notwithstanding, our conversation ranges occasionally to all points of the compass—for we have men of all degrees and employments; but its two poles are the trains we go up by, and the houses we live in; these are our bonds, these are our subjects of perennial universal interest; everything else is more or less capricious, casual, and liable to immediate annihilation by the topics which control us like Fate.

We are, as we have said, married as a rule, have on the average about a child and a half a piece,

and have been wedded from one to five years. The lives of our wives when we are away—that is, during the whole day—is a subject on which we have very vague notions; but we have a general idea that they gossip a great deal, and occasionally sew on buttons. That they are idle mostly, we fear, but we console ourselves by thinking that there is not a gentleman left in the place to flirt with, except the very old bachelor, the doctor, and the clergyman, and that in due time they will have to teach the children. At present, however, the most promising scholar of all has, as far as our experience goes, only arrived at the feat of spelling 'dog,' with ivory letters at dessert, after an amount of bribery and corruption in the way of almonds and raisins, that would astonish Totness or Great Yarmouth. However, we all appear to be fond of our wives, and not too fond of our neighbours', which is something in these days, and is, according to the cynic of the place, the old bachelor above referred to, who is the only aboriginal we found in possession, to be accounted for on five grounds—namely: (1.) That we are away from our wives all day. (2.) That they are away from us. (3.) That as we are thus separated half our waking hours, we have none of us been married more than two years and a half. (4.) That as the poison of matrimony is thus diluted in an equal bulk of separate life, it cannot possibly be more than half the strength of continuous matrimony; therefore none of us has been married more than fifteen months. (5.) That we never see our neighbours' wives except at church.

The last ground is, I need scarcely say, utterly untenable, though there is not much visiting of the old-fashioned kind. All our acquaintances are made in the train, and from this fact comes the first great division of our society—namely, smokers and non-smokers. Next to trains and houses, tobacco is perhaps the most general topic of conversation in the railway-carriage. We are smokers, as a rule, but the minority are powerful. An acquaintance out of the train springs generally from an unfinished conversation. Two men find that there is some point neither connected with train, house, nor tobacco, on which they have a mutual interest—the conversation begun in the train continues up the hill, till broken by an exclamation from one that he lives 'down there,' and hopes to settle the point another day. The other perhaps suggests that he may as well come in after dinner, and have it out over a cigar. He calls, and finds not only the cigar good, but the host delightful, and the wife a lady, and the thing is done. Dinner-parties, however, are as yet very scarce, and balls scarcer. These will doubtless come in time, when the society becomes more general and matured, but I for one would not wish to hurry it. In the first place, we have no daughters old enough to bring out; and in the second, we are all too tired, when we get home in the evening, to care to stir out, unless it be next door to drink tea, or across the heath to smoke a pipe, or to play a game of billiards in our subscription-room.

Billiards is a favourite amusement of ours. We don't gamble, but play for pence with as much ardour as some of us used to do for crowns when we were bachelors in London. Here, too, our great parent the railway comes to our aid. We meet on just the same footing as we do in the train, and for about the same time; we chat and play for an

hour perhaps, and then depart on our several ways, without any presumption of deeper acquaintance. The game so hateful to the married ear, is here divested of all its evil. Our wives hear the word without a shudder; and if we believe what is whispered, sometimes in the daytime the 'board of green cloth' is surrounded with the latest fashions, and Julia scores three, while Amelia pockets the red. But I fancy, if you listened attentively at the window, you would not be long before you heard some such words as these: 'Don't you find those Gothic windows very gloomy?' or, 'Whatever in the world makes your husband come home by that horrid 6.50?'

But if our little affairs are permeated with the peculiar odour of our primal origin, how are our great ones affected. They are not affected merely, they are determined and governed. In the first place, we have no very rich people; in the second, we have no very poor; we belong exclusively to the middlings. Again, we are, with few exceptions, city men, with a taste for fresh air at night and morning. Our architecture is the cause of the former, our railway of the latter. Our houses are all moderate in rent—and the man who needs good stabling and a few acres of ground must go elsewhere—but they are eminently respectable, and have fair-sized gardens, which, as they are visible to all, from the lowliness of shrubs and palings, require to be kept in very nice order. So we preserve an equilibrium of simple and gentlemanly competence, verging, on the one hand, to moderate luxury, and on the other, to genteel poverty, below or above which we go not.

Born of enterprise and commerce, our society at home is as nearly without either as possible; we have no interest in our own prosperity, the two companies relieve us of all burden in that respect; they do all the business, we are mere passive occupiers of domiciles. Suburbopolis is a very Castle of Indolence, where we come to dine, and enjoy ourselves, and sleep after a hard day's work. Stockbrokers, solicitors, merchants of coal, and soap, oil, and wine, we transact no business at home; even the lawyers lose their natural avidity, and consent to draw up a lease or a will as an act of friendship or charity. The doctor and the clergyman are the only workers, all the rest are drones. Even the tradesmen have an easy—rather too easy a time of it. We must have meat and bread, of course, but most things else are imported from the metropolis by ourselves. We are not only our own importers, but our own porters also (mark that carefully, I beg; it is a strictly Suburbopolitan joke), and as we file up the hill of an evening, are usually encumbered with a basket of fish, a packet of grocery, or a three-volume novel from Mudie's or Smith's. So confirmed is this habit, that it is one of our peculiar idiosyncracies, and has actually led to the invention, for our convenience, of a particularly graceful species of satchel, which many of us carry suspended by a morocco band across the shoulders, and is called 'The Suburbopolitan.' The only tradesmen who have a tolerable time of it are the linendrapers, which, considering the husbands are away all day, is not perhaps to be wondered at; as for tailors, they are like snakes in Norway and owls in Iceland; and even the publicans are obliged to do a little farming to make up a livelihood, and one of them actually keeps cows, and sells rum and milk at the bar.

But there is one trade or occupation that pays, or that would pay, if it were not for the perverse nature of the men employed in it, and that is gardening. Everybody, as we have said, has a garden, and a neat garden. If we are ourselves energetic in anything, it is gardening; but our energy in that respect cannot keep pace with the growth of our weeds, whose power of resurrection is something wonderful; our grass, too—and we most of us have grass—is a powerful grower, and has to be cut when the dew is on it, or before breakfast; so, to say nothing of seeds and creepers, and bedding-out plants, we have employment enough for many gardeners—in fact, for more than we have got—and want of competition leaves us at their mercy. They have a giant's power, and use it as such. As a rule, their method of business is simple, and to be recommended, from a worldly point of view perhaps, and it is this: the first thing they do is to draw their money, and the second not to do the work. It is all very well to say, don't give them the money till after they have done the work, but I appeal to you, reader, remembering that we are at their mercy, if even after they have drawn the money they don't do the work, what will they do (or not do) if they have not drawn the money. There are, luckily for us, one or two brilliant exceptions; and for those who do the more scientific part of the horticulture themselves, there is a perfect gem of a boy of weak intellect, who has a mania for weeding, and will roll your gravel all day and night, simply for the pleasure of hearing it crunch.

I am in doubt, after all, about our growing individuality; even our taste for gardening is a logical result of the architect's scheme, which lotted out the ground into small pens with such low palings, that each man, as he walks in his garden in the evening, could, if he were suddenly turned into a cow, or even a sheep, obtain an easy and refined supper off his neighbour's flowers. Indeed our fences are our weak point, and we not unfrequently find in the morning that a beast strayed from the neighbouring common has devoured our private supply of lettuce, and mustard, and cress, or that a flock of geese are quietly breakfasting off the long results of patient watering of a five-shilling packet of hardy annuals.

On second thoughts, if we have an individuality, it is dogs. We all have a dog; why, it would be difficult to say, except on a principle of mutual annoyance and retaliation. Here again our fences betray us. There is always on the average one dog to be seen quietly scratching up flowers in each garden, which dog is probably out of sight of his own residence, and very likely being sought for the while with tender cries of 'Charlie' or 'Puggie,' by a tearful domestic, who holds in her hand a broom-stick with which she has just administered a sound thrashing to some one else's 'Charlie' or 'Puggie.' But even in this our fate controls us; we have nothing bigger than a Skye terrier, for no one has time to give a large dog exercise, or a yard to chain him up in.

Did I say no one? Forgive me, Jenkins; but then you are an exception to every rule. Jenkins has two dogs, both bigger than himself, which he exercises every morning between six and eight, with a good eight-mile walk; he then goes to town and does his day's work. On his return he again takes out the big brutes, who have been howling at their chains all day, for another long

walk, and he thinks he enjoys life. Such is the fate of the man who resists the decrees of fate; determined to be an exception, he is ignorant that he proves the rule.

Other exceptions we have, but as a rule we are sensible enough to accept our conditions; we know we are Cockneys, and are not a profound knowledge of agriculture; that we have chosen to live at Suburbopolis, because we prefer fresh air to London smoke, ease to conventionality, and trees to chimney-pots, not because we believe our proper sphere is among poets, or artists, or farmers; because we can enjoy ourselves more, and need not spend so much; in a word, because we have the sense to consult at once our own inclinations and pockets, and the strength to live our own lives without being influenced unduly by those of others. Our society is not aristocratic, it is true, but it is nearly free from snobbism; unconventional, but not Bohemian; without much show, but with much hospitality; not sanctified, but without vice; not luxurious, but comfortable; inexpensive, but solvent; so that, on the whole, the law of supply and demand has led to no bad results at Suburbopolis, and we have every reason to be thankful to the authors of our being, even if we look no higher than the railway company and the architect.

A NIGHT IN THE TOMBS.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

A MAT was now spread for me, near the second opening, and signs were made for me to lie down, which I gladly obeyed. Some of the gang placed large stones against the entrance, so as to block it up; while others, passing through the inner doorway, brought out wood, and began making a fire; the dwarf fetching the pots and flat brass plates, and then several bags, containing rice, dried fish, and the spices used in their curries. The rest lay down on their mats, and watched the operations. I did the same for some time; but at length, worn out by the adventures of the night, and not relishing the dense smoke that rose from the cooking-place, I curled myself up, and fell into a heavy sleep.

I must have slept some considerable time, for, when I awoke, the band were lying around me, most of them asleep; those who were not, sitting up on their mats, indulging in a few last whiffs from their bamboo pipes, were evidently shortly about to follow their example. The table was strewn with fragments of rice, broken bits of fish, and overturned drinking-cups. One man alone was alert, and he was leaning against the outer doorway, dressed, and evidently placed there as sentry. The table was between us, and it was only when I rose to a sitting position that I could see him. Next to me lay the chief, fast asleep.

They took no notice of my movements, and after sitting up a short time, and taking a good look round, I again lay down, though not to sleep. Now the first excitement was over, I began to realise all the danger of my position: without doubt, I was in great peril. Murders were of almost daily occurrence, and the robbers who infested the country were known to be desperate and merciless; the local authorities were utterly powerless to quell them, and it was only on rare occasions that our government interfered.

Even supposing my friends were willing and able to pay the money, what guarantee had I of my life? To set me free, now that I had a knowledge of their retreat, would only be to endanger themselves, whereas my death would render all secure; and what faith could be placed in the honour of such ruffians? Again, should aid be sent, how long would it be ere it reached me, even supposing they succeeded in following my vague directions; and delay, I knew, would bring with it mutilation, which, even if I eventually escaped, would leave me a cripple, utterly unable to follow my profession. What, then, was to be done?

Escape by the outer door was impossible. Even should I succeed in passing the sentry, how could I hope to get clear away, weak and deficient in knowledge of the country as I was? and the inner door most probably led into the recesses of the tomb, from which there would be no exit. Still, this seemed my only chance. Might I not be able to conceal myself in some of its ramifications, or find a corner where a desperate man could defend himself till assistance came? I hardly dared breathe a hope of the possibility of a way out; yet such a thought continually came uppermost in my mind, and buoyed me up by its very hopelessness. In any case, to stop was mutilation, probably death; to go, could not be worse. Drowning men catch at straws, and no one who has not been in the like position can imagine the desperate clutching at the vaguest scheme of escape which then presents itself. I determined, therefore, to lie still until all the men were asleep, and then to steal in and explore beyond the inner door.

So far, circumstances would favour my scheme. The opening was close beside me; I could place my hand upon its sides; and the table would prevent the sentry noticing my movements, as long as they were confined to a small area. On the other hand, I was weak and utterly defenceless. My clothes hung in shreds about me, just as the first robbers had left them; and altogether I felt as unfit to attempt any active exertion as it was possible to feel, but desperation lent me strength, and I determined to go on.

I first looked about for a weapon, but though I saw plenty, both knives and jingals, they were either too far from me, or too much under the sentry's eye, to be available. The men who remained sitting up now slowly dropped off, rolling themselves in their coarse matting, and snoring lustily. When the last had lain down, and all was quiet, I cautiously wormed myself along the ground, and crawled into the opening. The sentry was leaning sideways against the other doorway, looking away from me, and was humming in a drowsy, sing-song way; so I felt that as far as he was concerned, I was safe, and the thought gave me courage. I had to creep in some half-dozen yards before I felt I was secure from observation; then rising, I proceeded on my hands and knees, till a turn in the passage blocked up the cave I had left. The passage was narrow—not more than four feet in width, and about six feet high, so that I could just stand upright in it. Behind me, a faint light on the right-hand wall shewed the proximity of my enemies; ahead, all was darkness. Carefully picking my steps, I stole on. After going about a dozen yards, I came to a turn at right angles with the way I was going, and passing this corner, I saw in the distance before me a faint light. I now pressed on quicker, and found

the light came from a large chamber or cave, hollowed out of the rock, and into which the passage led. The light was in the further end, where several small coloured lamps were burning before a 'joss-house,' two tawdry images, and a few plates of fruit and water, indicating its character. Round the cave—which must have been some fifty feet square—were piles of broken coffins, placed here long before the robbers made the place their den. In one spot, they had been split into firewood, and lay piled in a heap ready for use; beside them were several bags, containing rice or other grain. But the object that riveted my attention was the figure of the dwarf. He was squatting on the ground, with his back towards me, and leaning over a small opening; beside him lay a small bag, into which he slowly dropped some pieces of money. So absorbed was he in his occupation, that the slight noise I made in entering the cave had not disturbed him, and he continued clinking the dollars one after another into the bag, swaying his body, and counting in the sing-song manner so peculiar to the East. The lamps shed a dim and almost painful light over the place, making it difficult to distinguish much more than its leading features, and for some little time I could see nothing but the broken coffins, the joss-house, and the dwarf; but presently, my eyes becoming used to the darkness, I was able to make out two small square openings, about three feet from the ground, on either side of the cave. They were both about the same size, perhaps four feet square, though the actual aperture was much less, owing to the rubbish that lay in them. To gain them, was my next thought; but how to do it, with that infernal dwarf in the way, puzzled me.

There was but one way open—it was his life or mine; and decision in such cases is easy. Picking up a piece of heavy wood, I crept up behind him, and measuring my aim, brought it down full on his bald head: a bright red streak started out across it as I struck, and he rolled backwards without a sign or motion. Undoing his waistband, I quickly tore it into strips, and made his legs and arms fast; then rolling up the rest, I thrust it into his mouth, binding his jaws as tightly as I could, by way of a gag, and then rolling him against the coffins, placed several so as to hide the body from any casual search that might be made. I did not stay to examine his treasure, which lay in several small bags at the bottom of the hole he had been seated near, and beside which was a small stream of dollars, that had poured out from the bag he was holding when I struck him, but merely contented myself with placing the latter in the excavation, and covering it with a loose board; and then all traces of the way I had taken being concealed, crossed the cave towards the openings. Taking a lamp from the joss-house, and carrying my stick, I made for that on the right. The rubble had fallen so thickly at first that I had to creep very cautiously on my hands and knees to get along at all. Further on, in places it had accumulated so much as to render progress almost impossible; but by working away with my piece of wood, I managed to creep along a considerable distance. Unlike the other passages, this one ran straight, so that, on glancing back, I could just see the opening, and the light in the cavern I had left.

I must have been crawling for nearly an hour, though I had not gone a hundred yards, when, on advancing my hand to feel for the next step, it

only grasped empty space. Passing the light forward, I found I was on the extremity of a cavern of vast proportions, limited towards the sides, but in front, black undefined space. The floor was about three feet below me; so I stepped down, and poking up the lamp with a splinter of wood, I held it above my head, and looked around. It was a strange and awful sight, and one that few have ever looked upon before. On either side, as far as my eye could penetrate, stretched two lines of coffins, resting on trestles fastened into the rock. Tier upon tier they lay from roof to floor, all painted in flaring colours with dragons and other fabled beasts, their attitudes astounding, their eyes starting from the sockets in pictorial fury, and their mouths vomiting clouds of yellow flames. From the head of each coffin hung a long red flag, emblazoned with Chinese characters in black; many tattered and decayed, with slimy-looking cobwebs clinging to them; others fresh and bright, as if placed there yesterday. Comparatively few of the coffins were perfect; many were broken or decayed in parts, and some had crumbled away altogether, leaving only the empty trestles to mark where they had been. On the floor, round the sides of the cave, lay a confused débris of crumbled wood and bones; here and there, a bone or skull, still undecayed, sticking out, in startling contrast to the dirt around it.

Where the fronts of the coffins had fallen away, the skeletons of their occupants could be dimly seen—some perfect, some headless, all more or less mutilated. Out of one on the right, the whole side had fallen, and the trestles slightly giving way, the coffin had tilted forwards, allowing the skeleton within to slip partially out, and the white skull, still fixed to the trunk, grinned fearfully at me, as it lolled out of its resting-place. For a moment, I felt sick and unable to go on, almost giving up my idea; but the thought of the ruffians behind me, and the fate they had in store for me, flashed across my mind, and firmly setting my teeth, I turned away from the hideous object, determined to proceed.

Turning to the left, I now walked along the side of the vault, avoiding the loose heaps of débris, brushing away the gaudy flags, when they swung back solemn and deathlike into their former places, and carrying my lamp well above my head, so as to discover the slightest opening or doorway. Proceeding slowly like this, I presently saw a white object in front, and in a few seconds discovered that I had reached the further end of the cave. Like the other from which I had started, it was unoccupied, but upon it, in place of rows of coffins, a gigantic skeleton was painted. It was about thirty feet in height, and was seated on a huge vermilion dragon; on its head was a gilded crown; in one hand a naked sword, and in the other a roll of papers. Two huge eyes glared from the gleaming sockets, fascinating me with their look, till I could almost believe I saw them rolling in ghastly triumph at my intrusion. The artists had by means of shadows, cunningly painted in, succeeded in giving their conception the most lifelike yet diabolical expression possible to imagine; indeed, considering the place in which it was, and the circumstances under which it must have been viewed, it was one of the most awful and repulsive creations. Recovering from my stupor of astonishment, I went close up to the monster, and, holding up the light, looked closer in. I now saw that the

ribs of the skeleton formed a framework, bent outwards like the bars of a grate, and that within was a space large enough to admit of several persons standing; the framework stood slightly ajar, but there was a staple and hasp attached, evidently used at one time to fasten it. Looking still closer, I found that beneath the belly of the dragon was a great opening, shaped something like an oven. I stepped in, and sounding with my stick overhead, found the roof was curved, and of metal; behind it several pipes, like those of an organ, ran up towards the back of the figure. This metal roof was corroded and blistered, as we see the backs of our fireplaces at home, and the rocky sides were discoloured, as if by the action of fire. This gave me a clue to the mystery. I remembered reading some account of how the Chinese in former days used to offer up human victims on the death of any of their great men, most frequently choosing a barbarous death by fire; the sacrifice being made on some religious grounds, though more often prompted by the private passions of the priesthood. If such had ever been the case, the horrid apparatus before me was easily accounted for; and considering the place where it was, evidently the tomb for ages of some mighty family, I cannot think but that the conjecture was correct.

Finding no outlet, I now turned back along the third side, retracing my steps to the opening I had come in by. This side was precisely like the other: long banners, decaying coffins, and heaps of bones and débris. Like it, also, there was no opening or outlet.

When I reached the far end, I sat down on a broken coffin close to the aperture, and again thought over my position. Escape there was evidently none. This chamber formed the limit of the tomb, far buried in the mountain, set apart, from its remote and secure position, as the sepulchre of a race, and for the horrid ceremonies of their funeral rites, which, being against law and the prejudices of the people, could only be performed in the most secret places; hence the chain of caverns, the winding passages, and the last narrow and almost impassable tunnel.

One chance remained: the second opening I had seen was still unexplored, and as long as it was so, so long did it offer a hope of escape—a poor one, a hopeless one, but the last, the only one, and therefore to be tried.

Placing the lamp in the tunnel, I put my hands on the lower edge, and was just going to spring up, when a sound arrested my attention. Though I knew that all behind was silence, death, and decay, yet for a moment my heart stood still, and I gasped for breath; the next instant, the sound was repeated, and the reverberations echoing along the passage plainly told whence it came from.

Blowing out the light, I placed my head in the entrance, and listened. Far back, I could distinguish a tiny spot of light, marking where the second cavern was, and from thence the sounds came. Presently, the spot vanished, and again appeared, then went out again. Placing my ear on the floor of the tunnel, I could hear a confused sound of voices calling out; and though I could distinguish nothing more than their low murmur, I had but little doubt that my absence had been discovered, and that the band were already in search of me. That they had me like a rat in a hole, was but too evident; that they knew it, was not so certain, the chances being that superstitious fears would prevent

them examining further into the recesses of the tomb. At anyrate, where I was, I was tolerably safe, till hunger should compel me to give in, or till help should arrive. True, I had only a bit of wood to defend myself with, but then only one man at a time could pass through the tunnel, and by standing ready on one side, I should have a good blow at him ere he could get out. Hunger was my only fear; and help, if it came at all, would be here in twenty-four hours at most. Turning over these thoughts in my mind, I grasped my stick and waited.

I had been leaning against the side for an hour or more, when a scratching noise in the tunnel roused me, and on looking down it I noticed that the light had considerably increased, so much so that I fancied I could distinguish the inequalities in the side of the rock. The scratching still went on, sounding quite loud and near when my head was in the tunnel. The cause was evident—the men were coming along the passage after me! Had there been any doubt, the next few minutes dispelled it: I plainly saw a small lamp, such as I had carried, advancing along the tunnel; immediately behind it was a man's face.

Clutching my piece of wood, I stood on one side, and waited anxiously for his appearance. Presently, the light streamed out, glinting down the dismal cavern in a long flickering line, lighting up the ghastly death-banners on its path, till it lost itself in the darkness beyond. Then the noise grew louder, and I could hear the hard breathing of my pursuer. I raised my arm, clenching my teeth with desperate resolve, and drawing in my breath as the sound advanced. First came the lamp, pushed cautiously forward by a naked arm; then a man's head—it was the head of the chief. I saw his eye glare on me as he caught sight of my figure, but ere he could draw back, the stick descended with a dull thud on his bald crown; the lamp fell with a crash to the earth, leaving the place in pitchy darkness; and with a groan the ruffian sank down stunned in the passage. Instantly, all was still; then I heard a scuffling sound behind the body, then low whispers, and then more scuffling, growing fainter and fainter till it was lost in the distance. The fellows, scared by their leader's fate, had beaten a retreat.

Alone with the dead and dying was not a pleasant position, but the encounter had roused my blood, and I felt up to anything. Laying hold of the body by the shoulders, I dragged it out of the tunnel, and, passing my hand over it, felt for his knife; and drawing it from his belt, where I found it sticking, I laid it down beside my trusty stick, and again seating myself on the coffin, waited for their next attempt. I had not long to wait: again I heard the scratching in the tunnel, and again I got ready for the attack.

As before, the sounds gradually grew louder and louder; I heard the breathing of the fellows, and expected every moment to see the lamp poke out. I stood in the same place on the right side of the entrance, a little back, so as to have full play for my arm, and kept the stick raised above my head.

This time they had changed their tactics, and kept their light behind them, so that I had to strain my eyes to watch for any approach. At length I saw something emerge slowly from the opening, like a man's head. Now was the time to strike. I took a steady aim, and let fly. Down came my stick; I felt a sharp shock in my arms,

and it broke short off. They had shoved in a long bamboo, with a roll of cloth round the end of it, and the artifice had disabled me. The next instant, ere I could recover myself, a man jumped into the cave, turning sharp round, luckily to the left, to catch me; a second followed, then some more, but I never stopped to count them. With the mad impulse to escape, I rushed down the cavern, now feebly lighted by the lamp one of them held, plunging blindly over the broken bones and heaps of rubbish towards the darkness. In the distance, behind me, I could dimly make out the forms of my assailants, now some dozen or more, already collecting for a search. Escape was impossible. I could see by their fierce gestures that they had discovered the body of the chief, and that instant death would be my lot should I fall into their hands. The events of a lifetime came crowding into my brain in those few minutes of despair. Never before had I been so near death; and to meet it alone in that awful sepulchre, surrounded by those grinning skeletons, was terrible!

Suddenly, a thought seized me. I turned towards the side, and felt along the rows of coffins for a whole one. Ere long, my hands came to one that seemed firm; I raised the lid, and tilted it up behind; then lifting myself by the arms, I sprang into it. Something soft splashed up about me, and a cloud of small dust burst forth and nearly suffocated me; but I drew in my legs, and, stopping my mouth as well as I could, lay down at full length, and drew the cover over me. Fortunately, the wood was sound, or my hiding-place would have been but of small use to me; as it was, I stood a good chance of being passed over unnoticed. There must have been many hundreds of coffins in the place, and to pick out the one in which I was, would be a work of time; and time was my only hope now. My great fear was that the confounded dust would make me sneeze; it was as pungent as snuff, and pervaded the whole place; my mouth and nose were full of it, and my eyes felt hot and smarting from the finer particles getting under my closed eyelids; but in a little time, after undergoing anguish in the effort to resist, the inclination passed off, and I lay in comparative comfort.

I could hear the fellows hunting about the upper end of the cave, hammering at the coffins, and jabbering excitedly. They were evidently making a strict search, and I could hardly hope to escape. By and by, the hammering sounded nearer, evidently drawing down towards where I was. I did not dare look out, but I felt nearly certain it came from the opposite side; if so, I should gain some little time, and ere they completed the circuit of the cavern, my friends might come. The hammering now became louder and louder; I could hear the rotten wood crumbling and falling under the blows; the cavern resounded with the noise, the roof echoing back the cries and blows till the whole place seemed alive. It then gradually died away, as they passed on towards the far end, and at last grew quite faint in the distance.

Thinking all safe, I raised myself a little on my elbows, pushing up the lid of the coffin, so as to look out. Far down the cave, I could see the faint glimmer of lights, moving quickly about, and could hear the distant noise of blows as the band pushed onwards in their search. They could not be far from the end, and would soon be turning back. What if I could slip out of my concealment, and

make for the entrance? I had a good start, and they would be some time ere they gave up the search. It was probable the whole band had joined in the hunt, and were now in the cave with me, so that I might expect the outer cave clear. It was a last chance; every moment was of consequence.

Tilting the lid back, I raised my legs out of the coffin, and dropped them over the side: the lid turned over, and fell with a slight noise against the rock. The sound seemed louder than it actually was, and made me pause for an instant ere I descended. As I did so, my eye caught something moving, not many paces from me. The next instant, a fearful yell burst from it, repeated again and again with demoniacal energy, and filling the cavern with its hideous echoes. Then a figure sprang towards me, and ere I could jump down, caught me by the feet, clutching them with such a tremendous jerk that the coffin gave way, and both it and myself fell headlong to the ground. As I fell, the fiendish face of the dwarf met my eyes, grinning malignantly, and his body writhing about my limbs like a snake. In vain I strove to free myself; the brute clung to me with devilish pertinacity, his arms pinioning mine close in to my body, and his short legs twining about mine so as to render escape impossible. The cloud of dust that my fall had raised filled my mouth and nostrils, almost suffocating me, and making my efforts every moment relax. Whichever way I turned, there was the dwarf's face, distorted with savage glee; his eyes glaring at me, red and lurid in the dim light. Already I heard the band coming up, in answer to the cries of the brute; faster and louder their footsteps resounded on the rocky floor. Nearer and brighter grew the lights, throwing out the figure of the dwarf as he clung round me with horrid clearness. Another moment, and they close over me; down they come in one confused mass, falling over each other in their mad eagerness to seize me. A dozen hands grasp me, but the dwarf still holds on, as if unwilling to part with his revenge. Knives gleam; clubs are raised: all hope and life seem vanishing in that fearful moment! My hands are fast to my sides; my bare face lies exposed to their murderous blows; my eyes close, and I clench my teeth in agony. The earth is beaten up by their mad fury, but the light is uncertain, and their aim is bad, so but few reach me. Now I feel a grasp on my throat; the hideous face of the dwarf is over mine; his hot breath scathes my own; his huge hands encircle my neck. Tighter and tighter they press: my head is bursting; the blood boils in my forehead, and surges over my brain. Hideous noises fill my ears; strange yet familiar sounds are in the air. Above the horrid tumult of the struggle they rise. I hear them closer now; they bear down every resistance. Air! air! His fingers are pressing into my flesh; my brain is cracking. Help! help! Then came a great crash—a mingled tumult of shouts and yells. I feel strong arms tearing at my neck, but the demon dwarf clutches with terrible energy, and it seems as if the flesh will give way. Another tug, and his grasp relaxes; slowly and reluctantly, the fingers open; his hideous body is flung from me; and with a dull consciousness of relief, I sank to the earth.

It was some time before I could recognise any one. I heard voices near me, and could distinguish figures round me, but that was all. Gradually,

however, they grew more distinct, and I made out the well-known dress of our men-of-war's men. Beside me, kneeling, was little Georgie Thompson, supporting my head, and dabbing my face with his handkerchief. Seeing I recognised him, he raised me up. 'Just in time, Ned,' said he, using his familiar name for me; 'not many minutes to spare, I fancy.—What a nasty place you have got into, all amongst the dead men; a regular Davy Jones's locker ashore'—

'How did you come here, Georgie?' I said, interrupting him. 'Are all the fellows caught?'

'Oh, they're safe enough,' said Georgie; 'we've got most of them, and the lads are after the others: they are having a famous chase down there!' He pointed down the cave, from whence loud cries and shouts proceeded; the cheers and laughter of the Jacks mingling with the cries of the robbers.

After a time, the men came back, crowding round me with wondering eyes at my battered, dust-begrimed form; then one of them, taking me in his arms as tenderly as an infant, bore me away towards the tunnel, the rest following. With some difficulty, I was passed through the narrow passage, and so through the two outer caves into the open air.

Oh, that glorious breath! How I drank in the bright sunshine and cool refreshing breeze! It was like one rising from the dead, indeed. The long lines of hills undulating before me; the blue sky, dotted with fleecy clouds; and beyond, the tall mast-heads of the shipping—all came upon me as the awaking from a fearful dream, and with the excitement, I burst into tears. As we went towards the ship, Georgie, who walked beside me, related how my rescue came about.

After I was struck down on the road, the boy took to his heels; and dodging the ruffian who followed him, jumped up a tree that grew near, and from its branches watched the whole of the scene that took place. When the band moved off, he followed cautiously behind, marking the way as well as he could by breaking twigs, and placing stones on one another: in this manner he tracked the fellows to the cave. Daylight breaking soon afterwards, to his delight he saw the shipping before him, not many miles away, the band having made a considerable circuit in their way. Keeping the mast-heads before him, the boy made straight for Whampoa, over hill and valley, till in less than three hours he reached it. Going to Elston, he told him in a few words what had occurred, and they both went on board the *Alcestis*; and Captain Hamilton, immediately on hearing their account, sent off a boat's crew, under Georgie's guidance, to the rescue. The boy being too tired to walk, the men carried him by turns; and at length, aided by his marks and directions, reached the cave, and attracted by the noise in the inner part, arrived there, as we have already seen.

There was quite a scene when I was carried on board the *Tien-sin*, all the lads crowding round to shake me by the hand, and wish me joy of my escape; but I was glad when they took me below to my berth, and laid me in my cot. What happened afterwards, I cannot say: I know I fell into a heavy sleep, troubled with fearful dreams, in which all the perils of the past twenty-four hours were enacted over and over again, and that I woke to toss and writhe in all the horrors of illness. Brain fever, they told me afterwards, and a narrow touch I had of it: fortunately, the ship put to sea,

and the fresh air soon brought back my wandering senses, and cooled my fevered brain.

In a month after the ship sailed, I was able to get about as usual; and many a middle watch did Georgie and myself beguile with the story of my adventure.

When we got to London, I looked out, at the *Jerusalem*, the file of Hong-kong papers published after my encounter, and in them found a long and graphic account of the affair.

It seemed that I had fallen into the hands of a notorious freebooter named Hin-lo, long the terror of the country for miles round Whampoa. His body was found in the cave, my blow having proved fatal; and such of his followers as were captured alive, were taken to Canton, and executed by the authorities. The caves were the ancient sepulchre of Chin-huen—a family that long before the present Mantchu dynasty, ruled with more than regal state over a great part of the empire, and whose name is even now venerated and extolled. In the hole I had seen the dwarf near, was found a considerable sum of money and other property: this was handed over to the blue-jackets who captured the gang, and a fine haul they made of it. Little Georgie came in for his share, the men insisting on share and share alike with the brave little fellow; and his best delight just now is spending it as fast as it came.

The owners, on hearing the circumstances, were pleased to compliment me on the resolution I had shewn; and the mate of one of their ships leaving, they put me in his place, Georgie going with me as 'third,' his articles being just out.

I have written this account by the desire of an old friend, to whom I related the circumstances, and who declared it was quite worth printing. On his shoulders, therefore, must rest the many faults and inaccuracies I have committed; my readers always remembering that Jack is more at home with a marline-spike than with a pen.

WRITING-MACHINE FOR THE BLIND.

FIVE years ago, our happy home was gradually overshadowed by a cloud, at first 'small as a man's hand,' but soon enveloping us in outer darkness. It would be wearisome to the reader to tell of that long and irksome year wherein we began to fear that an insidious disease was gradually undermining my dear husband's health, and, by unmistakable signs, manifesting to us that blindness was inevitable. Each day, the shadow deepened—the picture on which he gazed became more dim—till at last the fearful dread became the still more fearful certainty, that henceforth he must be utterly dependent on the hand of affection, not only for his daily wants, but also for every important act of life.

I think we do not sufficiently pity those who, having reached middle life, and being in the height of professional or mercantile prosperity, are either suddenly, or by slow and wasting disease, bereft of vision. Who can describe the feelings of the sufferer, when the consciousness dawns upon him that he will never more behold the lovely verdure of spring—that no rising sun can bring daylight to his darkened eyes—that he must for ever relinquish the favourite pastime, the dearly-loved book—that

even the loved faces of wife and children can be recalled to him only by an effort of memory, and that life itself will henceforth be nought save a long night, where happiness visits him only in dreams! This must be a case of frequent occurrence, and one calling for the deepest commiseration, as I see it is computed that there are more than twenty-five thousand blind in Great Britain alone. Of these, many are uneducated; but many, too, must be possessed of cultivated minds, and of an age to have acquired the rudiments of education. To these, this paper is addressed, as my husband found some alleviation from the intolerable weariness of inaction by the use of a little machine, apparently not well known, but easily constructed by any working cabinetmaker. I had wearied my friends as well as myself to find a system which would enable my husband to write down his ideas without the aid of an amanuensis. At the various asylums, I found the blind could communicate with each other by means of pricked letters, and with their more fortunate friends outside by the aid of types; but anything simple, which he could easily manage himself, and by the assistance of which he could note down his ideas, and soothe the tedium of a sleepless night, I could nowhere procure. One day, turning over the pages of a magazine, I saw a short notice of Prescott the historian, in which it was stated that he wrote his celebrated histories by means of a frame with wires intersected, using, instead of a pen, an agate style. By its aid, he could write with great rapidity, as the use of ink was not required, and as he threw the sheets on the ground when written, his secretary had merely to place them in the order of their numbers. On this hint, I soon acted; and by the aid of a clever workman, constructed an inexpensive, but most handy little machine, which was our companion in all our wanderings, and by whose aid many a sheet was covered with manuscript.

As my earnest wish in this short notice is to benefit those who, like me, have the unspeakable sorrow of seeing a beloved companion bereft of sight, and doomed not only to darkness, but also to the misery of inaction, I will speak of the little machine so minutely, that I think even a village workman might construct one from the description.

We had two—one for note-paper, which was found inconvenient for common use, as the finger required to be shifted rather often. The other was for post, which must, however, be cut to fit the frame. This frame is nine inches long, and seven and a half wide, the margin itself an inch and a quarter, or thereabouts. Thirteen brass wires are intersected, but not drawn too tightly, as by their yielding, it gives room for the long letters. Next to the wires comes a sheet of carbonised paper, such as is used in warehouses for their pass-books; then a few sheets of good post, firmly fixed into the frame by a piece of wood or tin; this is fastened by a small button, or sliding bit of wood, in the same manner as the picture-slates, a

favourite toy with children. To a blind person of average ability, the fixing of this little machine constitutes one of its greatest charms; and as the mind, when thrown on its own resources by the loss of all outward attractions, generally expands, many would turn to literary pursuits, who, had their sight remained unimpaired, would have been immersed in the bustle of business.

The frame is on the table, the carbonised paper placed within, the sheets of post next, and then the piece of wood firmly fixed in and fastened; then comes the letter or manuscript to be written, and this only requires a little care. The right hand holds the style, which we found most suitable made of agate, and costing, at any bookseller's, half-a-crown: the forefinger of the left hand keeps count of the number of wires written; and should any interruption take place, the writer has only to count, and remember the number of lines which he has written, and it is very seldom that one line obliterates another. Not, unless after the lapse of some days in resuming the work does the memory prove treacherous. We may hope, however, that there are few blind persons but what have some kind friend or companion to assist and comfort them, and it is easy for that friend to look over the manuscript. This was not required by my husband, whose correctness was such, even as to punctuation, that the printer seldom made any mistakes in the copy. As the mere comfort of being able to write a letter to a friend is a pleasure to everybody, I feel certain, if a trial of the machine I describe were made, the blessing to the educated blind would be great indeed; and by the aid of *Chambers's Journal*, it cannot fail to be seen by many who have relatives deprived of sight, and who have learned to write before they became blind.

This article was to have been written by the dear hand for whom our ingenuity was taxed, but the fate that so often overtakes the prematurely blind has taken my loved companion from me—the kind heart has ceased to beat, the busy brain to think, the skilful hand no longer notes down the thoughts that crowded upon the still active mind; and he rests in peace, in the bright sunshine of eternal day.

A CHANGE OF LUCK.

CHAPTER XIII.—AN INTERVENTION.

THE arrangements of the baronet and the dwellers at Elm Cottage were, however, temporarily interfered with by a sudden arrival at the Lodge. Early in the story, it was mentioned that a letter from a female relative, whom Sir Mark alluded to as 'Eleanor,' made him very angry by some mysterious reference it contained. The lady was Walter Dayton's mother, widow of Sir Mark's brother, and also the baronet's cousin, in addition to the marriage relationship. She resided in London; and Walter, on the accident to his uncle happening, at once sent a messenger to the adjacent town with a dispatch to be transmitted to her by electric

telegraph, communicating the startling intelligence. It was in consequence of this, that, before noon had well turned, Mrs Eleanor Dayton, who was a very energetic lady, rattled up to the Lodge-front in a common fly, wholly unexpected either by Walter or Sir Mark. The latter especially was evidently annoyed by the visit; and so far as his strength enabled him, he shewed his displeasure.

'I had hoped you would have appreciated my hurrying down to see if I could be of any help,' was the significant remark which a footman overheard Mrs Dayton make as she was withdrawing from the baronet's sick-room, whither she had hastened before removing her travelling-dress.

'It might be thought I was dying; but I am not going to do any such thing,' petulantly answered the baronet's weakened tones, as she closed the door.

The fact was, Walter Dayton, when he wrote the telegraphic message, was under the influence of the alarm which everybody then felt, and his account had led his mother to expect finding Sir Mark in a more critical position. Perhaps her hurrying to the spot was misconstrued by the baronet into a selfish attention to the interests of her son Walter, his expected heir, rather than as indicating sympathy for himself. But another matter, possibly, had to do with his ill-temper. A few minutes after their interview, he irately ordered a servant to take a second note, which he had himself found strength to scrawl, down to Elm Cottage. This further communication postponed Mrs Dunstan's visit until the following evening, assigning as the reason the arrival of a visitor. Was this the partial cause of his vexation?

'Why, if this is so, it may be a blessing the accident has happened! It is perfect madness in him—you don't know what I mean, and I cannot explain it.' The speaker was Mrs Dayton, and the remarks were addressed to her son. She was a fine-looking lady, dressed in the height of fashion, though her attire was made to intimate her widowhood; and her features and bearing now shewed considerable excitement.

'Adams shewed me the note, and I saw that it was addressed to Mrs Dunstan; but she is quite old—he would not be sending the flowers to her,' answered Walter.

'When you first named it to me in your letters,' rapidly resumed his mother, 'I wrote to him; and from his reply, I feel sure the obstacle is not out of the way. Goodness! It would completely alter your position. If there had been no obstacle, he would have let me know quickly in his reply. He must be mad—the impudent, intriguing girl—and so you would say, if you knew all,' she added, with an amazed face. 'Unless, indeed, the obstacle is removed, and that I will not believe. Is everything to be upset in this way?'

'Why cannot you tell me?' and Walter looked wonderingly at his mother.

'I will go to his room again; I can tell from his manner when he is speaking the truth. Stay here till I come back,' was the excited answer, and the lady hurried away.

Walter Dayton and his mother had been walking

to and fro for some minutes at the east end of the Lodge, having come out-of-doors together, possibly to make sure of not being overheard. Walter had informed his mother of what he had observed, what had been told him, and what he suspected, in the case of Lucy Eddowes, and she had received the news in the curious way we have seen. Leaving him on the lawn, she, as she intimated, went back straight to the baronet's chamber. Those who were in attendance in the waiting-room adjoining almost immediately heard quite angry voices; and after brother-in-law and sister-in-law had been closeted together this second time for some ten minutes, the bell in the chamber was violently rung.

'Get the carriage ready for Mrs Dayton; she is going to return home,' was the angry order of the baronet, when the servant answered the call.

The lady, though much agitated, was not without some self-possession. She interrupted, that she would mention the precise moment for the carriage later; and haughtily motioned the footman from the room. A minute afterwards, however, she followed him.

'I have promised to go back in the morning; he was for turning me out at once! But he says he does not blame you; and so I don't care.' Mrs Dayton, as she made this communication to her son, whom she forthwith rejoined below, tossed her fine head indignantly. 'I certainly shall not go and sit down at home quietly, for I do not believe his evasive hints. If it had been true, why did he not speak out?'

'I wish you would tell me what you mean?' inquired Walter, gazing into his mother's flushed face.

'I cannot do so; it is a family secret. Do you know much about your uncle's letters?'

'How—in what way?'

'Have you noticed what parts he receives letters from?'

'Not particularly.'

'I wish you had.'

'I am sure Adams knows—he would notice, I am certain.'

'I daresay he would, for I never liked the look of him. I'll see him,' was the prompt rejoinder. 'But I should like to have a sight of this bold hussy.—No; they, of course, would know you; and I recollect where the cottage stands—at the turn between the two roads.' This was said in answer to Walter's commencement of a remark. 'It won't be so noticeable, going alone; and perhaps they won't remember who I am. You go up to his room—the madman! He said he only blamed me; and if you keep friendly with him, all will be right. But I am your mother, and it is my duty to look after your interest, to say nothing of the family credit; for I never heard of such a thing,' and she raised a hand in astonishment.

'Don't go in to him,' she added; 'but let him know you are waiting near.'

Mother and son then returned into the Lodge, whence the former by and by reissued wearing bonnet and cloak. Strolling down the walks at first very leisurely, as if simply observing the grounds, she eventually passed through the gates, and hurriedly went in the direction of the village. A quarter of an hour or so later, a lady presented herself at the door of Elm Cottage, and asked to be obliged with a cup of water. The inmates could well have dispensed with visitors just then, for very shortly

before they had been disturbed by the receipt of Sir Mark's second note, which had especially discontented Lucy; but, almost uninvited, the lady passed within the doorway, and seated herself upon a chair to rest. Mrs Dunstan and Aunt Milly were both in the parlour, but neither of them recognised their visitor, though they must have seen her at a distance on the occasions of her previous visits to the Lodge. After unreasonably prolonging the interchange of commonplace remarks, Mrs Dayton's boldness was rewarded by a glimpse of Lucy, who just entered within the room, paused, and then retreated. Her beauty seemed to take her covert critic by surprise; and when Mrs Dayton took her leave, which she did almost instantly, she shook her head, as she walked hastily back towards the Lodge.

'It is a good job Sir Mark has you to help him in his business matters, Mr Adams,' said Mrs Dayton that evening in the library, whither she had requested that Adams should be sent to her. 'His correspondence, of course, passes through your hands; so, perhaps'—and she made a light pause, as though to intimate that it was not of much consequence—'perhaps you can tell me whether he gets any letters from Cornwall—letters with a Cornish postmark on them?'

'I do not recollect any, ma'am,' answered Adams, dropping his keen eyes from scrutinising her face.

'Are you sure? Does he send any remittances into Cornwall?'

'Yes, quarterly; I have seen the cheques drawn.' 'Just so;,' and Mrs Dayton's face grew brighter.

'Never mind the amount, or the names either; I am not prying. What is the name of the place?'

'I believe it is something like Trewifen,' slowly answered Adams: this calm, self-possessed fashionable London lady overmastered him.

'Thank you. It is all right. I only wanted to know whether a person is still living;,' and Mrs Dayton instantly ended the conversation, by rising and quitting the room.

'How is it there don't come receipts, for he doesn't get any letters from there?' muttered Adams, looking after her. 'Cornwall? Cornwall?' and he shook his head. 'She knows Sir Mark's secret; it was her letter which he tore into bits that gave me the first clue! What is she beginning to inquire about?—But I have enough on my hands just now,' he briskly added, shaking himself up. 'I will go down again to the bird-man's cottage, and see whether I can get in this time.' He, too, passed through the door.

Mrs Dayton, in the course of the evening, sent a message in to Sir Mark's room, asking if she might again see him. Dr Morris, who had returned to the Lodge, brought back the answer; he said his patient was worse than when he left him in the morning—he must have been excited; above all things, it was requisite he should be kept quiet, and it would not be safe for him to see any one—not even relatives, either then, or even early in the morning. Mrs Dayton briefly intimated, in reply, that she quite understood the latter remark, politely adding, that she would rely upon the doctor expressing her regrets to Sir Mark, with her sincere wishes for his speedy recovery.

'Perhaps I went too far,' she said to Walter, when Dr Morris had withdrawn; 'but so long as he is not offended with you, it does not matter. I will go back to town as soon as possible, and consult with Brother Philip: he must go down into

Cornwall and make the inquiries, for remittances would not keep going if it is as your uncle hinted.'

'What is it in Cornwall?'

'Perhaps I may have to tell you, since, if his infatuation continues, some steps will have to be taken. But I can't tell you now. I'll lose no time, however, for that girl at the cottage is as beautiful as a witch!'

Mr Walter Dayton sighed in corroboration of his mother's opinion. Early the next morning, the grand town-lady left the Lodge.

CHAPTER XIV.—LUCY STILL FURTHER PUZZLED.

More flowers were sent down from the Lodge to Elm Cottage during the day, the old butler being again the messenger selected: he took no further notes, Sir Mark thinking, perhaps, that the bouquet would be hint sufficient. When Mrs Dunstan, in the evening, leaving Lucy and Aunt Milly in the grounds, presented herself within the Lodge hall, the gorgeous footman, in pursuance of the instructions previously given, at once led her up the staircase. The poor old lady's heart nearly sunk within her at sight of the magnificence which, to her partially dimmed eyes, shewed in a kind of mist around her, as they passed through several splendidly furnished apartments. Finally, she was ushered into a small sitting-room, whither Sir Mark had found himself strong enough to adjourn from his chamber. Mrs Dunstan was much surprised to find, from the baronet's altered look, that the accident had been far worse than she had imagined. He had partly hidden the bandage still about his head underneath a velvet smoking-cap, but his face was very pallid; and, though his dressing-gown concealed his figure, a much-increased stoop from the shoulders was noticeable. What Dr Morris said of Sir Mark having been greatly agitated by Mrs Dayton's visit, was quite correct; it had much disturbed him; but whatever had passed between them, it seemed rather to have intensified his intentions towards Lucy Eddowes than altered them. After Mrs Dunstan had expressed her sorrow at the accident, and the baronet had apologised for its having prevented his visit to the cottage, the conversation went on.

'You know, Mrs Dunstan, what passed between your niece and myself?'

'Yes, Sir Mark,' faltered the old lady.

'Has it your approval?' he asked, with a feeble smile, as if it were easy to predict the answer.

'You have done the family, as well as Lucy herself, great honour by the proposal,' answered Mrs Dunstan, rising to make a trembling sort of courtesy.

'Please, be seated.—Lucy's father, I hear, was a surgeon, and her mother, with a brother and sister, both younger than Lucy, lives in Leicestershire.'

'Near Melton, Sir Mark.'

'A good neighbourhood. And the family, I feel sure, from your own excellent standing, has always been respectable, Mrs Dunstan?'

'Certainly, Sir Mark,' replied his visitor, the colour coming into her faded cheek. 'A generation or so back, the means of Lucy's parents on both sides were larger.'

'Thank you for these explanations,' the baronet faintly said. 'I feel I can be quite candid with you. I know that in this step I am acting, as some would say, a little—a little rashly.' He got these words, at last, out very quickly, and with a

curious expression flashing across his pinched face. 'You expect I should be able to make Lucy happy?' he added, a little nervously. 'There is a difference in our ages, but I am not an old man; I see no reason why the matter may not turn out well for both sides.' Gripping the sides of the easy-chair with his long white fingers, he continued: 'You see no reason why it should not, I hope?'

'Lucy, Sir Mark,' began the conscientious old lady, 'has what are called good looks, if you will pardon me, sir, and she knows it; and she may be a little vain of it. She has always been aspiring, and, I may almost say, has appeared somewhat out of place in our sphere.' The speaker's breath came laboured as she went on. 'You, Sir Mark, would place her in circumstances more suited to her tastes; and she could not but be grateful to you, as well as having those deeper feelings, which, of course, she must have in the matter, or the suit, however tempting, ought not to have been accepted.' The aged cheeks were now nearly as crimson as they ever were in their youngest prime.

'That answer is everything I could have wished, Mrs Dunstan; and the baronet, who appeared to be much gratified, struggled up into an erect posture, and held out his shaking hand. 'To-morrow I shall be strong enough to write to Lucy's mother myself, and may I beg you to explain the cause of even the day's delay? Has Lucy learned of my accident? She would, I can understand, feel a delicacy, under all the circumstances, in expressing any wish to accompany you?' He looked very anxious, waiting for the answer.

'We have all been much agitated,' stammered Mrs Dunstan, 'and have remained in the cottage. We only heard of what had so unfortunately happened from the butler, sir; and you will excuse my saying, none of us thought the accident was quite so severe.'

'I will remember his good management,' interrupted Sir Mark. 'I did not wish Lucy to be alarmed. Has she expressed any wish to—to—'

'She is now walking in the avenue, with my old friend Mrs Hibberd, so as to hear early of the news how you are,' blushed Lucy's aunt.

'How kind she is! It is very thoughtful of her,' he repeated, in pleased tones, glancing at himself all over. 'I am, of course, anxious to have the pleasure of seeing her,' he went on, pulling himself up, and looking into a chimney-glass over the mantel. 'No, no; I must deny myself the pleasure,' he said, sinking back into the chair: he was shocked at his infirm appearance. 'To-morrow, Mrs Dunstan, I should be much gratified if you could bring her with you. The servants, excepting those I can trust, shall be out of the way. Could it be managed?' he asked with a sigh, glancing at himself.

'It is her duty, and cannot be wrong, Sir Mark,' replied Mrs Dunstan. 'We will come most willingly; and I will at once write to Lucy's mother.—I fear you are fatigued with this conversation,' she added, rising; 'besides, my news will be expected; and she ventured to smile. With all her conscientiousness, she could not quite throw off her woman's match-making instincts.

'I have nothing here of which I can make even the smallest present as a reminder to Lucy,' he said, glancing around. 'But please say I shall not forget her kindness in accompanying you: I rely upon your fully explaining why it is I do not see her. I am indeed just a little faint; and he

turned uneasily in the chair. 'But will you add to your message, Mrs Dunstan,' he went on very politely—'will you add that I am delighted to know that when Lucy is Lady Dayton' (again the words came with excited rapidity), 'her aunt will do both myself and her niece much credit by the self-command she shews in even difficult circumstances?—Pardon my not rising,' he said, lifting his hand to his smoking-cap.

Much confused with all this condescension, poor Mrs Dunstan could only make a rather undignified courtesy in acknowledgment. 'Can I ring the bell for assistance, sir?' she asked.

'Thank you. It is only a passing faintness; I suppose it is from the loss of blood.—Good-bye,' he added, as, after pulling the bell-cord, she again courtesied, and passed out into the adjoining room. One resplendent lackey hurried in to his master, and another took her in respectful charge, to reconduct her through the rooms, corridors, and down the wide, echoing staircase. Sir Mark, Mrs Dunstan thought to herself as she followed the servant, must have written into Leicestershire before he proposed, or how could he know what he had mentioned about Lucy's family? It was so. During the days intervening before the *fête*, the baronet had written to an old hunting acquaintance at Melton, who had made some inquiries, though quite ignorant of why the information was required.

Lucy had, during Mrs Dunstan's absence, learned the news of the accident to Sir Mark most effectually through Aunt Milly. While the latter remained walking about in the avenue, the former having strayed into a side-path (she did not want to be recognised by any one connected with the Lodge), a servant passed, and Mrs Hibberd managed to get into chat with him. As the result, she was enabled to convey to Lucy, a few minutes afterwards, a highly dramatic account of the occurrence, to the effect that Sir Mark had been nearly killed, as it was at first thought, by an attempt having been made at murder, but, as was afterwards discovered, by a large portion of the roof of the new conservatory falling upon him!

'Suppose it had happened just before, Lucy!' exclaimed Aunt Milly, raising horror-stricken hands. 'You might both have perished together, like the true lovers in the old story!'

Sir Mark, not unlikely, would have felt a certain pleasure had he witnessed the shock which this intelligence gave to Lucy. He would not have known, any more than did Mrs Hibberd, a part of the cause of it. Lucy's thoughts had, as usual, been brooding upon Mrs Leighton, and she now vividly remembered that she was that night flitting about the conservatory. 'The roof of the place appears to be perfect from here,' Lucy remarked, gazing towards the erection, which had not yet been removed.

'In your place, I should certainly force my way in,' energetically urged romantic Aunt Milly; 'and if the servants stopped me, which isn't likely in your case; but, if they did, I should tell them who I was going to be.'

'Do not embarrass me so, aunty,' replied Lucy, half-displeased this time. 'Sir Mark cannot be dangerously ill, or he would not have written as he did.'

'O dear! if he died now, all would be spoiled,' followed up Aunt Milly. 'Baronets' widows remain Ladies, of course, if they were only wives for five minutes. If he is in danger, I think, Lucy,

he ought to marry you at the bedside: I have heard of that being done.'

Foolish Aunt Milly was again urging upon Lucy that it was her duty to force a theatrical entrance into the sick-chamber of the baronet, as a proper proof of her devotion, and Lucy was standing, pale and perplexed, beside a tree, scarcely at all listening to her companion, but trying to disentangle her own puzzled ideas, when Mrs Dunstan returned down the wide walk, bringing the authentic information. Lucy seemed rather relieved than otherwise that the baronet had not decided to see her that night.

'Sir Mark, then, does not believe it was an attempt to injure him on the part of any one?' asked Lucy, after making close inquiries about his wound.

'To injure him!' echoed the aunt. 'A piece of loose wood, he states, fell from the conservatory roof and hit him.' Mrs Dunstan, acting on what she judged to be Sir Mark's wish, had made the least of his injury in her account of it.

'He will write to Lucy's mother, you say, Sarah, to-morrow?' broke in Aunt Milly. 'There can be no withdrawing, then.—Not that I thought of such a thing!' she hastened to say. 'No; he is a man of honour: it is all right.' Mrs Hibberd, then and there, beneath those stately trees, clapped her hands together, and gave way to an unseemly display of delight, ending in more low courtesies to the now partially irritated Lucy. The maiden was very silent on the way back to Elm Cottage, and so was Aunt Dunstan; Aunt Milly, however, kept gossiping away, answers or no answers.

As they were approaching the cottage, Lucy fancied she saw, through the increasing dusk, a woman at the entrance of the field-path, just across the road, but she took little notice of it. Mrs Dunstan and Aunt Milly had entered the door, and Lucy was following, when the little front-gate slammed afresh. Instantly the girl felt a touch upon her arm, and turning, she saw Mrs Leighton.

'Can I speak with you one moment?' she said, in a curious tone, half-command and half-entreaty. Without waiting for any answer, she retreated towards the road, holding up a white finger in a beckoning attitude. Lucy paused for a moment, hesitating; then, to the wonder of her aunts, both of whom had turned about, she followed. They crossed the turnpike-road, and, passing through the stile on the other side, walked a little distance along the field-path.

'He is not in danger?' was Mrs Leighton's first question; but instantly, on the very heels of it, she added: 'Did you talk much?'

'Our acquaintance must not be continued, Mrs Leighton,' Lucy haughtily answered: she had not forgotten the strange behaviour at their last meeting, besides which, the other's present manner offended her.

'So soon!' quickly answered her companion, and drawing herself up, the fierce eyes flashed an accompaniment to the sneer. But at once her voice subsided into a fawn as she went on: 'If you have seen him, there is no danger?'

'I have not seen Sir Mark,' said Lucy still loftily.

'You have not seen him! Why—why? You say there is no danger!'

'My aunt says so.' Lucy was surprised by the other's vehemence into direct answers.

'Your aunt!—When do you see him?'

'To-morrow.'

'It might occur to you to mention me—as,' she hurriedly proceeded, lifting one arm strangely, 'as a curiosity, merely to keep on the talk.' She laughed, ending it abruptly, and pressing her hand over her bright eyes before she added: 'Will you grant me a favour? Do not mention me. Say that you will not—swear you will not!' In the dusk, the speaker almost seemed to dilate in size, as she roughly laid a hand on Lucy's shoulder.

'I will not mention you,' she hastily said cowering, for she was frightened.

'Do not go,' smoothly said the other, following up Lucy, who was retreating to get back to the road. 'This accident will not delay the marriage, I hope?' and her voice grew most intense.

'You hope so?' echoed Lucy, who, now they had regained the stile, and she saw the light blazing in the cottage windows across the road, recovered her courage, and with it came much indignation. 'Why do you hope so? Why do you wish me to marry Sir Mark at all?'

'Hush! Some one may listen!'

'I do not care,' went on Lucy, carried away with passion; and, raising her voice still higher, she, by a rapid movement, placed the stile between herself and the other. 'I have nothing to conceal! An accident, do you say it was? I do not believe it! It was an attempt to kill him! Here, take your diamond cross, which I have wished ever since to give back to you; I will have none of it. For anything I know, you crept behind him and struck him! There! I will speak with you no more; though he ought to know.' Lucy straightened herself defiantly, reaching the jewel over, but it seemed to fall upon the grass.

'Stay; you will be perjured! Do not, do not;' and the speaker, recovering from her surprise, drew back inside the fence, as if not to affright Lucy into retreating further. 'Why are you unjust to me?' The powerful voice had a wondrously sweet tone in making this appeal.

'I am not unjust, and I will keep my promise not to talk of you with—with any one, though things are so mysterious,' said Lucy wavering.

'Dear, beautiful Lucy!' was whispered, as if by way of thanks.

'Pardon me, but it is all such mystery,' replied Lucy, partly yielding to the fascination.

'Let me explain it,' murmured the other, drawing a little nearer. 'But this place is so open; and the glittering eyes traversed around.

'I do not intend to visit your cottage any more,' firmly said Lucy.

'What is it you wish me to explain?'

'I wish you!' exclaimed Lucy in surprise.—'There is no need to say anything,' she added, turning away.

'It is cruel!' pleaded the soft yet strange voice, and Mrs Leighton's white ungloved hands made themselves seen gripping the wooden rail against which she leaned. 'I did not attack him; I would sooner die myself than stop his marriage with you.'

'Then I will not marry him!' impulsively answered Lucy.

A low shrill scream burst from the other's lips; and as Lucy, now thoroughly alarmed, started to run across the road, she was conscious that Mrs Leighton raised her white arms, and fled into the dark, drear fields. Aunt Dunstan had heard the cry, for she had returned to the cottage door; and now, followed by Aunt Milly, she hastened

forward to the gate. Lucy pushed between them, without answering their question as to what the alarm meant; and she further surprised them by refusing to give any explanation of why Mrs Leighton had accosted her, afterwards in the cottage.

Mrs Dunstan hunted up the not very frequently used pen and ink, took a candle, and went to her own chamber; there she sat herself down to write to Lucy's mother an account of these curious events, intending to send it off by the first mail in the morning.

'Lucy, I don't like that Mrs Leighton; she seems to me like a mad woman!' whispered Aunt Milly, approaching the girl as she stood silent on the hearth. 'Have nothing to do with her, dear.'

'I can master her, mad or sane!' answered Lucy with a victorious look, although a little returning fright shewed itself at the corners of the eyes. 'I can frighten her in a moment.'

'How?' inquired her old companion, greatly surprised.

'No, I ought not to have said what I have done. I am going up-stairs for a few minutes,' Lucy herself now took up a candle, and left the parlour. It was poor Aunt Milly's turn to sit alone puzzled, gazing into the fire, shaking her head vaguely.

Lucy, on entering her chamber, first of all took off her slippers. Was it that she might not be heard by her aunt in the room adjoining?—for she began to pace to and fro. To judge by the broken words which now and then escaped her, she was still bewildering herself about Mrs Leighton and this strange accident to Sir Mark. At length she suddenly lifted the light, and, going into a corner of the room, bent down over her opened box. From somewhere at the very bottom of it, she first pulled out a parcel of four or five letters; next, a little gold locket, in the shape of a dove; and finally, a dried bunch of twigs and leaves, which looked as if it had some day been a bouquet of flowers. It was much too ancient to have come to her from the Lodge! These articles she placed upon the dressing-table, and surveyed them; opening two or three of the letters, she read them, one after another. Her bosom heaved as she did so, and after the last letter had fallen from her hand back upon the table, she still stood for some time motionless, lost in thought.

'I ought to burn these,' and her fingers stirred towards the letters; 'and this should be put away,' shifting her touch to the trinket: 'the flowers as well. Then I shall have nothing left of Harry's.' Her fair head drooped, and the rosy lips pouted, and something like a sigh was heard. Harry must surely have been some old flame of the fair Lucy's. Fortunately, Sir Mark Dayton's ears were sufficiently distant. 'Why wasn't he a baronet, or rich?' she childishly asked; and, going to the bed, she threw herself roughly upon it. By and by the candle was burning very low, and she got up to attend to it; when she came towards the light, crimson patches were visible on her cheeks—they looked like tear-stains. Her aunt could now be heard moving in the next room, and Lucy huddled the relics she had been looking at back into the box.

'We shall see how Harry's sister looks when she has to call me Lady, for I shall insist upon going to my mother's often!' Lucy bathed her face for a moment or two, and then, with a mien almost gay, passed into the next room.

'I have quite made up my mind, aunt,' she said to Mrs Dunstan, who was taking an envelope from a drawer.

'Have you? To do what, Lucy?'

'To marry Sir Mark.'

'To marry him!' repeated the aunt, nearly dropping the candlestick. 'Why, you accepted him at the ball!—Are you quite sure of your feelings, Lucy?' she earnestly added.

'O yes, quite.'

'Why have you been thinking it over again, if you are not unsettled? Sir Mark will write to your mother in the morning, and I have done so now. It will soon be too late to release yourself honourably.'

'I don't wish to do so; I am quite decided,' was Lucy's half-cross answer. 'Is the letter ready for my postscript? May I read the whole of it? Will not mother be surprised?' and a smile spread over the bright face.

'I thought it would be better you did not write your letter to your mother till Sir Mark himself wrote; but I wish now, Lucy, you would yourself write at once. Sit down now, and tell her all that has happened in your own way—you will then more clearly understand it yourself: remember what a serious matter it is, Lucy,' Mrs Dunstan solemnly added.

'Yes, I know, aunt,' Lucy impatiently answered, going over and hastily kissing her pale-faced relative. 'I shall like to write. Am I to tell them all? Will they not be astonished, and mother especially?' The white shoulders shrugged in pleased triumph as she sat down to the writing-desk. Aunt Dunstan shook her head gravely as she left the room, with her own letter in her hand, intending to shew it to Aunt Milly; for if she did not, she knew well what the consequence would be.

'Mrs Leighton *must* know Sir Mark, and why is she living here?' asked Lucy, breaking off before she had written two lines. She sat for some minutes, the pen quite idle in her hand, looking into the blaze of the candle.

'I shan't write half so gay a letter as I thought of doing,' she poutingly murmured, arousing herself, and bending again over the sheet.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

PROFESSOR TYNDALL'S two lectures on Faraday and his Discoveries made a good beginning of the Friday evening series at the Royal Institution. The lectures were, in fact, a summary of the biographical memoir of Faraday written by the lecturer, and since published. It will be read with interest by all who can appreciate the character of the man of whom it treats—a man who sought not his own glory, but loved science for her own sake.

Some interesting papers have been read at the Royal Society. Professor J. Phillips, who has been observing the moon for twenty years, has given an account of certain parts of its surface, which adds not a little to what we knew of our bright satellite, and will serve as a standard for years to come by which to test whether changes are now actually going on in the moon. This is

a much-debated question, and without some trustworthy description and drawings to which to refer, it cannot possibly be settled. These will be printed and published in due time. Professor Huxley, in a paper on *Archæopteryx lithographica*, a bird of far remote ages, of which the only specimen known exists as a fossil in the British Museum, shews that Professor Owen's description of the creature, published five years ago, is inaccurate, inasmuch as the left leg is described as the right leg, and the back as the belly, involving, of course, other mistakes. One result of this will be that naturalists will now have a better knowledge than before of this most ancient bird, which Professor Huxley considers may have belonged to a class of animals between birds and reptiles. This subject is one he has been for some time investigating, and treated of in lectures.—Dr J. Barnard Davis in his paper, *Contributions towards determining the Weight of the Brain in the Different Races of Man*, shews that the average weight of brains of Englishmen is about 49 oz.; of Frenchmen, a little over 45 oz.; of Dutch, Frisians, Italians, Swedes, and Lapps, the weight comes near the English, while the German brain is in many instances heavier. The Polish brain is 47 oz.; among Hindus and other races in India, it is from 41 oz. to 44 oz.; but Mussulmen have more, and the Khonds, one of the aboriginal races of India, much less—not quite 38 oz. Then, again, on travelling towards China, the brain-weight of the tribes there settled increases. In Africa, the weight is from 43 to 48 oz.; in America, the average is 46 oz.; in Australia, from 41 to 42 oz. Weight of brain is said to denote intellectual capacity; so, if this be true, the best intellects should be found in Britain, Germany, and among nations in the north of Europe.

Mr Darwin's new book is just published in two handsome volumes, *On the Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, in which a swarm of interesting examples is given, shewing the modifications produced by change of circumstances, with the conclusions therefrom deducible. It will help to elucidate the former book *On the Origin of Species*.—Sir John Lubbock has edited and brought out Professor Sven Nilsson's book on *The Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia, an Essay on Comparative Ethnography, and a Contribution to the History of the Development of Mankind, &c.* It is a book well worth reading by all who desire to know how from a state of savagery in long-past ages the leading nations of Europe have grown to their present degree of civilisation.

The Registrar-general has published a statement of the rate of mortality, per 1000 persons living, in some of our largest towns and cities, during the year 1867. The metropolis, it will be seen, was one of the healthiest: thus, London, 23 in the 1000; Bristol, 23; Birmingham, 24; Sheffield, 25; Hull, 25; Leeds, 27; Edinburgh, 27; Dublin, 27; Salford, 29; Glasgow, 29; Liverpool, 30; Manchester, 31; Newcastle-on-Tyne, 31. In all these places, the rate is below that of 1866; but the

publication of such a statement should act as a spur to the authorities of each town, and make them do their utmost to reduce their death-rate. Some towns are justly proud of never having been taken by an enemy. Would it not be a title of honour to be proclaimed as *the healthiest town in the kingdom*? The births in London during the year numbered 112,264; the deaths, 70,588. In 1866, the numbers were respectively 107,992 and 80,129, which shews a decided advantage in favour of 1867.

The social commotions which have disturbed the quiet of nations, have been followed by commotions in the earth, very disastrous in some places. It seems as if all the volcanoes of the globe were seized with a fit of rage. Hecla led off; then Vesuvius followed with tremendous jets of fire and red-hot stones to a thousand feet in height or more, and poured out streams of lava, which still continue. Thence the impulse travelled westwards, and eruptions and heavings terrified some of the West India Islands, altered their levels, broke up their surface, and made of St Thomas a very bad bargain for the Americans, who had coaxed the Danes into selling them that pestiferous little island. Denmark must be heartily glad to get rid of it. Then the long extinct volcanoes in Central America recovered their eruptive activity; Nicaragua was severely shaken; and on the Pacific slope of its mountains, the volcanic glare illumined the country for leagues around. Other parts of the great continent were disturbed, and strong earthquake-shocks were felt in New York and other states of the American Union. It may be that the impulse will travel still further to the west, and that we shall hear of outbreaks in the volcanoes of the Indian Archipelago and of Japan.

Messrs Leighton Brothers' new patent process for printing is very remarkable, being a sort of topsy-turvy process, soft type on hard surfaces, not hard type on soft surfaces. Moreover, it can be applied to inner as well as outer surfaces. For instance, the Leightons will print you an advertisement, or particulars of a chemical analysis, or a song, or anything else, on the inside of a bottle, a jar, a tea-cup, or a lamp-shade. After this, it will be easy to understand that to print on plates, dishes, cups and saucers, basins, and so forth, is an easy matter. They can also print on marble, stone, iron, leather, sail-cloth; in short, what can they not print on, for the types are made of vulcanised india-rubber, and never wear out? With a roller properly contrived and fed with ink, it would be possible on a dry day to print all along the foot-pavement of a street. What a chance for enterprising advertisers! Messrs Leighton exhibited their process last year at one of the President of the Royal Society's soirées, and it is now, as we hear, being successfully worked by a Company in Paris.

A few American items are worth mention. Brigadier-general Roberts, who has been charged by the government at Washington with the repairs

of the 'levees' (embankments) of the Mississippi, has proposed a plan for the reclamation of the vast extent of swampy lands along the lower course of the great river. It is to build dikes and barriers, and construct weirs, by which the flood-waters shall be allowed to overspread the swamps, and deposit thereon the mud they hold in suspension, until, in time, the swamps, and indeed all the low levels, shall be converted into dry land of the most fertile description. This process is well known along the Trent and Humber as warping the land; but the brigadier-general's is the greatest scheme of warping yet heard of. The Dutch may rival it by pumping dry their Zuider Zee—a project they often talk about—and converting the great wave-worn hollow into farms and pastures.

A builder in Philadelphia makes fire-proof ceilings with a flat arch of corrugated iron backed by concrete. The arch is supported at each end by what is technically known as a H-iron girder.—A nailmaking-machine has been brought out, which, of nails from half an inch to two inches long, will cut 3600 lbs. a day; of larger nails, 5000 lbs.; and of 'spikes' weighing from a quarter to three-quarters of a pound each, it will cut 2500 lbs. in an hour.—Printers will doubtless take interest in the fact, that inking-rollers made of a mixture of glue and glycerine, are better for their purpose than those at present made of glue and treacle.

During the late war in the United States, a number of manufactories of small-arms started into existence; and when the fighting came to an end, they found their occupation gone. But your Yankee is quick of resource, and soon the owners set themselves to manufacture in quantities certain kinds of small tools, which artisans had formerly made for themselves. Their attempt proved successful; and now many most useful tools are better formed and finished, and cheaper than they ever were before. Among the latest novelties is a tool-holder—that is, a handle into which many tools may be fitted one after another at pleasure. An elastic thimble in the handle affords the requisite gripe.—Another is an improved punch or drifting-tool, such as is used by boiler-makers, which, instead of the usual oblique cutting edges, has a very steep thread cut in reverse directions, whereby a series of diamond-shaped projections is formed, and these make a perfectly smooth cut in the work when the tool is used, and without the 'chatter' so often noticed with drifting-tools.—A novelty of a different kind is a 'steam-buggy,' which has been running in experimental trips on the roads about Boston, and is described as successful, for it has considerable speed, and is well under control.

From China also, we hear news of mechanical projects: at some of the principal ports, the government are establishing engineering schools and engine-works, with a view to build steamers for their own coasting-trade. So the lumbering old junks are to be superseded at last, and who shall say that the steamship will not be improved by so practical a people as the Chinese?

THE RAINBOW.

How high a gate of gorgeous light,
With film of gold and violet bright,
A wonderful and magic sight,
Is swiftly built,
And instantly the purpled height
Of mountain gilt!

The glory scarce begins to climb,
As rapid as the wing of Time,
When Earth beholds its finished prime,
And hushed admires,
As if to stir would be a crime
Till it expires.

Up springs the lark, in haste to soar,
His little bosom trembling o'er
With sudden wild tumultuous store
Of melody,
And loud and sweet the carols pour
From field and sky.

And now the hues on azure turn
So spirit-faint that sight doth yearn,
And scarce in front of heaven discern
Its tinted porch;
But on the dark-blue wave they burn,
A glowing torch.

O seraph track, that dost incline
Thy sudden path for steps divine,
Of life thou art the loveliest sign
Through all the years,
While Hope's ethereal colours shine
In human tears!

Thou com'st between the rain's black wall
And Evening's sunset-opened fall;
Upon the golden radiance fall,
Like priceless gems,
The countless drops outparking all
Earth's diadems.

And even while the cloud is driven,
A vanished joy again is given;
Thy phantom bow of splendours seven
Returns as bright,
The glorious arch that reaches heaven,
A world's delight!

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